



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JURY CONVICTS THREE MEXICAN NATIONALS IN METH CONSPIRACY

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that three Mexican nationals were convicted by a federal jury today of participating in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

Armando Rodela-Aguilar, 43, a citizen of Mexico residing in Kansas City, and **Joel Castro-Gaxiola**, 40, and **Reyes Guadalupe Martinez-Ruiz**, 30, both citizens of Mexico residing in California, were found guilty on all counts of a March 31, 2005, federal indictment.

“Today’s convictions are the result of Operation Icy Hot,” Graves said, “a massive investigation involving nearly 100 individuals who have been importing high-quality methamphetamine into the metro area. This conspiracy involved a shipment of approximately two pounds of methamphetamine that was brought from San Diego, Calif., to be distributed in the Kansas City area.”

Rodela-Aguilar, **Castro-Gaxiola** and **Martinez-Ruiz** were involved in a conspiracy to distribute more than 50 grams of methamphetamine between Feb. 20 and March 3, 2005. They were also found guilty of possession with intent to distribute 50 grams or more of methamphetamine.

Castro-Gaxiola and **Martinez-Ruiz** were also found guilty of interstate travel in aid of a racketeering enterprise, the distribution of methamphetamine.

Castro-Gaxiola and **Martinez-Ruiz** were also found guilty of illegally reentering the United States after having been deported. **Castro-Gaxiola** was deported on Oct. 26, 2004, and **Martinez-Ruiz** was deported on July 4, 2004.

Two co-defendants have pleaded guilty to charges contained in the federal indictment. **Arturo Navarrette-Silva**, 39, a citizen of Mexico residing in Kansas City, pleaded guilty on Nov. 22, 2005, to his role in the conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. **Angela Rose Fennell**, 24, of City Heights, Calif., pleaded guilty on July 18, 2005, to interstate travel in aid of a racketeering enterprise (the distribution of methamphetamine).

Following the presentation of evidence, jurors deliberated about four hours before returning guilty verdicts to U.S. District Judge Ortrie D. Smith, ending a trial that began Monday.

Under federal statutes, each of the defendants except **Fennell** could be subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in federal prison without parole, up to life in federal prison without parole. **Fennell** could be subject to a sentence of up to five years in federal prison without parole. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael S. Oliver. It was investigated by the Kansas City Metropolitan Drug Task Force and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow/index.html